SPEECH BY THE HON'BLE MINISTER

Mr. T. K. Nayar:

Mr. President, Sir,

I have great pleasure in availing myself of this occasion to briefly review the administration of the subjects entrusted to my care during the current year, and explain to the House the main features of the budget for the coming year so far as they relate to these departments.

As the House is well aware, since the outbreak of war, with the exception of the first two years, Cochin has been passing through extremely difficult times, bristling with problems peculiar to war-time conditions and demanding the maximum united effort on the part of Government and people for their solution. Tiding over one difficult year, with deepening disappointment, we have often found ourselves confronted with yet another, equally, if not more difficult; and though called upon to face more and more puzzling problems, the familiarity we have gained with them by their repeated continuance, has enabled us to devise more efficient modes of tackling them, and if the House would agree with me in thinking that as years go by we are progressively getting more successful in maintaining public welfare amidst these untold difficulties, it will certainly be a matter of relief and gratification for the present and a source of encouragement for the future.

FOOD PRODUCTION

"Food, more food and still more food" has been, in recent times, the inevitable watchword giving rise to anxious moments and painful perplexities to all Governments in deficit provinces and states in India, and Cochin in particular, which along with Travancore and Bengal, has engaged the attention of not only the Central Legislature and the rest of India but even of the British Parliament. I had occasion to mention in my last budget speech that I could think of no better way of discharging the solemn trust placed in me than by tuning my departmeints to the solution of the all-important problem of Food and augmenting the facilities for the production of more and more food stuffs in the State. I am glad to inform the House that thi policy has been continued with unabated vigour during the current year.

Minor Irrigation.—The minor irrigation scheme which was started in 1118 withsan allotment of Rs. 1,70,000 was continued during the current year with a further allotment of Rs. 1,80,000. This has resulted in the completion of about 200 items of minor irrigaton works which have facilitated the bringing into cultivation of sew areas and converting of siinglecrop land sinto double-crop ones. A further sum of Rs. 1,75,000 has been ear-marked for the furtherance of the same programme in 1120.

Seeds.—Scarcity of seeds, manure, implements and cattle, has been attempted to be solved for the efficient progress of the food production scheme. 1,500 parasof paddy seeds were aissued to the ryots from the Government Central Farm for kole and virippu cultivation and further quantity of 1,000 paras is set apart for mundakan crops. A sum of Rs. 5,345 has been distributed to the ryots as loan for the purchase of seeds and tapioca sets. Over 1,700 packets of available seeds and 20,000 seedlings of vegetable were issued from the Central Farm. The number of grafts made available for sale from the Central Farm has also been raised to 5,000 annually.

Manure.—Increased facilities to encourage intensive cultivation by the use of manure in larger quantities have been made during the year. With the 23 manure depots which have been opend in addition to those established last year, it can now be said that all Panchayats excepting two—where too arrangements have been made to open depots without delay—have been provided with manure depots. Manure from these depots are given on credit and the ryots have to repay the cost only after harvesting the crops. Government have also offered a subsidy of 25 per cent in the value of these manures. Manure to the value of Rs. 1,49,000 has been already purchased and most of this has been distributed. Arrangements are being made for the purchase of more.

Implements.—Great difficulty has been experienced by the ryots in securing implements. Iron and steel have become scarce and the prices of these articles have risen abnormally. To overcome this difficulty, arrangements have been made with the Government of India for the supply of iron and steel, and orders have placed for the supply of 600 tons of iron and steel, at controlled rates. It is the intention of Government to distribute this iron and steel among the ryots either as implements or as rawmaterial at controlled rates. Arrangements are also made to get down a number of spraying machines and a small number of oil engines and pumps.

Cattle.—The problem of cattle-farming has become more important compared to previous years, since the ban placed by the Madras Government on the export of cattle from Madras

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Presidency has deprived the State of nearly 20,000 heads of cattle per year. Although subsequent negotiations with the Madras Government have resulted in the granting of 600 cattle to the State, the cattle problem still cotinues to be difficult. Steps have been taken to conserve the existing cattle and increase cattle-farming by preventing indiscriminate slaughter of cattle, making liberal grants for the maintenance of stud bulls and purchase of a number of young bulls by the Government Central Farm for distribution to the public. The idea is to have at least one stud bull in each Panchayat area. A scheme for the wholesale improvement of cattle within a period of 20 to 25 years is also under consideration of Government.

Vegetable Cultivation.—In order to meet the shortage of vegetables in the State and to grow such varieties of vegetables which are now being imported from outside, like potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes, etc., Government have taken up a scheme for vegetable cultivation in the Nelliampathis. An area of 500 acres of forest land has been set apart for cultivation and arrangements have been made to plant 100 acres with fruit trees like oranges, plums, pears, plantains, pineapples and mango trees. The remaining 400 acres will be put under potatoes and vegetable cultivation early in 1120. The capital expenditure for the scheme for 1119 and 1120 is estimated at Rs. 1,39,500. The advance on this account is expected to be realised by the sale of vegetables. When the fruit trees begin to bear there will be a reasonable return of the capital.

Hill Paddy Cultivation —It was decided to lease out the lands cleared for the purpose of Hill Paddy Cultivation to the public for cultivation of food crops at nominal rates of rent. The Hill Paddy Cultivation scheme as a Government enterprise was, therefore, stopped. Large areas of lands were leased out to the public during the current year. Applications are being received for leasing out the remaining portions. This revised scheme whereby the difficult portion of the work of clearing the hills was done by Government and the land was leased out on easy terms, has already enhanced private initiative to take to Hill Paddy cultivation, and it is hoped that ere long the whole area ear-marked for the purpose will be brought under private cultivation.

Goat-farming.—An experimental Goat Farm is arranged to be opened in the Central Farm at Ollukkara. 50 she-goats of the best milking qualities from various places in this State will be selected. A few he and she goats of the Jamne Pari and Barbari breed are being got down and it is proposed to get a mixed breed by the crossing of the local varieties with the improved breeds imported.

Dairy Farm.—Steps have been taken to improve the Dairy of the Central Farm and enlarge its activities. The Dairy was strengthened in 1118 by a small addition of cows and although attempts for further strengthening it were made, difficulties of getting the required transport permit delayed action in this direction. It is hoped that sufficient number for the purposes of strengthening the Dairy Farm will soon be purchased.

Demonstration and Publicity.—Since publicity and demonstration on the methods of cultivation and the scientific use of manures form an important aspect of the grow-more-food compaign, as many as 73 demonstration centres were opened in the State, besides the special demonstration conducted at the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition and Cattle-show held at Cherpu under the auspices of the National War Front. A Special Officer for Manure has also been appointed to facilitate the distribution and demonstration of manures and to educate the public on their proper use. Publicity is also being given regarding the scientific use of manures by the National War Front.

INDUSTRIES

Industrial Centre—Cottage Industries.—In the last budget it was proposed to organise various cottage industries in the Rural Industrial Centre at Cherpu. For this purpose, the office of the Assistant Director of Industries was shifted to this Centre, and he was put in charge of the work of organising and developing cottage industries through this Centre. During this year, the Centre, besides establishing and running cottage industries departmentally, has also organised artisans and rural workers in Co-operative Societies under the immediate supervision of Government. Manufacture of photo frames, lace garlands and caps, tooth powder, slate and slate pencils, dyeing, weaving and manufacture of shirting and clothing and other design works and oil pressing, are some of the industries pursued in this Centre.

Organisation of artisans.—The Centre is also organising co-operative societies of artisans. They are given accommodation in the Centre and are made to work under departmental supervision. Financial assistance in the shape of loan and organisation assistance in the shape of paid secretaries are also extended to them. The carpenters' society, the leather workers' society and the weavers' society are now functioning in the Centre successfully. Experiments and research in cottage industries are also being carried out.

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Hand-made Paper.—A hand-made paper factory has been working for some time. Since difficulties were experienced in calendering, the Paper Expert was deputed to Bezwada and Mysore for further study and he has now returned and a scheme for the manufacture of half a ton of paper per day has been submitted. The difficulties in calendering will be met by the purchase of a calendering machine and certain other minor implements.

Industrial Museum.—Arrangements have been made to start an Industrial Museum at Trichur. The manufacture of show cases and the collection of certain items of local exhibits have been already finished. Some of the outside Governments have also been addressed for details of their important products.

FISHERIES

On experiments conducted, it has been proved that several species of shark, yielding large quantities of oil of medicinal value, are available in our sea and backwaters. Government have made arrangements for extracting fish-oil and for marketing it.

Attempts are made to increase the catching of fish. Provision has been made in the budget for 1120 to bring 10 fishermen from British Malabar, who are experts in using bigger nets for deep sea fishing, in order to conduct the operations in our waters experimentally and to give training to our fishermen in this direction. A new fish-curing yard is also proposed to be opened in the year 1120 at Kannamali in Kumbalanghi Village.

CO-OPERATION

The Committee appointed to enquire into the working of the Co-operative movement in the State has submitted its report and the same is under consideration of Government. Some of the co-operative societies have played a prominent part in the distribution of seeds, clothes and other necessaries. A few have also run fair price shops successfully.

PANCHAYATS

In my budget speech of year before last, I have made a special reference to an important reform introduced in the Panchayat administration by granting more financial powers to the Panchayats in that it is entirely left to them to prepare their own budgets. I was watching with anxiety the results of this experiment. It is a matter of supreme pleasure for me to inform the House now, that from my experience of the last two years it has been abundantly clear that the reform has been worked out successfully by the Panchayats.

With a view to grant more and more powers to Panchayats, a bill has been introduced in this House, and it is hoped that ere long, with the co-operation of this House, it will come into law.

RURAL LIBRARIES

20 additional rural libraries have been started during the year and provision for 20 more has been made for the coming year, which will raise the number of libraries to 203.

VILLAGE COURTS

The Village Courts Act is now one year old. In addition to the 35 courts which existed last year, 12 more courts have been sanctioned this year, and the opening of all the new courts will be completed before the close of the year. With the opening of these courts, all the villages in the State will be brought under one village court or another. One of the main purposes intended to be achieved by the constitution of village courts was to avoid delay in the disposal of suits. Out of the total number of 2285 suits, including 607 pending in 1118, as many as 1816 have been already disposed of till 31st Medam 1119, leaving a pendency of only 469 suits. It may be stated that the number of suits pending on 31st Medam 1118, soon after the constitution of village courts, was 1947. This will enable the House to have an idea of the progress made and the promptness achieved in the disposal of suits in the village courts. There is also considerable decrease in the number of revision petitions. A conference of village court judges was held in the current year in which representatives from many village courts participated. The conference was useful and successful. Provision has been made for a similar conference next year. An examination of the Agents of the village courts was also held.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Epidemics.—The outbreak of cholera which began towards the end of 1118 continued in the first quarter of 1119 also. Vigorous preventive measures were taken and the attack subsided without much spreading. 36,602 inoculations were conducted. Outbreak of plague also was reported in the outlying villages of Chittur Taluk. Prompt measures were adopted to prevent

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further infection. There were attacks of small-pox in some of the rural parts and towns. Nearly 1,50,000 vaccinations were done in rural parts, 51,000 in Mattancheri and 18,900 in Ernakulam.

Malaria.—On the advice of Dr. Ramsay, the Malarial Expert of the Ross Institute, who visited the State, new measures are being taken to tackle malaria. A Malariologist has been appointed for this purpose.

Child-Welfare Centres.—It is proposed to start 2 child-welfare centres, one at Ollur and the other at Cranganur, next year.

Vital Statistics.—A Statistician is proposed to be appointed to systematise and consolidate the registration of vital statistics.

Midwifery service.—The appointment of ten additional midwives was sanctioned in the current year, but only four could be entertained due to want of qualified hands. Including those appointed in the current year, the total number of midwives in the State comes to 71. The selection of another batch of candidates for midwifery training was also made during the year.

Radio.—Radio sets have been installed in ten Panchayats and the scheme is proposed to be continued next year also, for which a sum of Rs. 10,000 has been provided.

AYURVEDA

Taluk Hospitals and Vaidyasalas.—With the intention of extending medical aid all over the State through the Ayurvedic system, 5 Taluk Hospitals, with an in-patient ward of 10 beds attached to each, and 7 Vaidyasalas were opened during the course of the year. 3 Grant-in-aid Vaidyasalas were also converted into regular Government Vaidyasalas. It is gratifying to note that the new institutions are growing popular as can be seen from the large number of patients who resort to these institutions.

It is also proposed to start 5 more Vaidyasalas in 1120 in the rural areas. Increased provision has also been made in the next budget for larger supply of medicines to the Ayurvedic institutions and for strengthening the staff in the hospitals.

Sales Department.—The Sales Department is also growing in importance, which enables the public to get genuine medicines at cheaper prices. On an average medicines worth Rs. 4,500 have been sold each month. The transaction has resulted in a small gain to the Government.

DEPRESSED CLASSES

Admission to the Harijan Hostel, Ernakulam, has been raised from 20 to 30 students. Increased provision has been made in the Budget for 1120, with a view to raise the number of collegiate admission to depressed class pupils from 20 to 30. The question of giving financial assistance to depressed class candidates for pursuing higher studies outside the State is also under consideration.

LAND MORTGAGE BANK

The rate of interest on loans disbursed from the Land Mortgage Bank has been reduced from 6 to 5 per cent. The Bank has also been allowed to float debentures at 3 per cent, guaranteed by Government.

Till the end of Mithunam, during the current year, the Bank has received 150 loan applications and disbursed loans to the extent of Rs. 1,19,828.

CONCLUSION

I hope I have covered all the broad aspects of administration relating to my port-folio. Before I conclude, let me express my heart-felt gratitude to the members of this House for the kindness and co-operation they have extended to me in the administration of the Transferred Subjects. I have often profitted by the criticisms which this House had occasion to offer. It is my genuine hope that this House, which has never failed to strengthen my hands when-ever necessary, will continue to extend its valuable co-operation to my endeavours in an increasing measure and to guide me by helpful correction so that I may discharge my duties to the maximum advantage of the general public. I am also equally grateful to the Diwan for the genuine spirit of good-will and co-operation I have always received at his hands.

The trend of recent events in the theatres of war indicate that the day of Victory is not far off. Let us hope and pray that before the next Budget Session the world will find a new era of Peace and Prosperity.

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